

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive quantitative research design, which is appropriate for identifying and measuring patterns of students' difficulties in learning English. According to Creswell (2014, p. 4), "quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables, which can be measured using instruments and analyzed using statistical procedures."

In this study, the researcher aims to examine the types and levels of difficulties encountered by students of the 2nd semester in the English Education Program at STKIP Persada Khatulistiwa in learning English. These difficulties may be influenced by internal factors (such as low motivation, anxiety, lack of interest, or low self-confidence) and external factors (such as inadequate learning resources, monotonous teaching methods, or lack of support from the learning environment).

Data collection is carried out using a structured questionnaire based on the Likert scale, which enables the researcher to quantify students' responses. The data is analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequency distribution, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, to identify common patterns and the degree of difficulty in each area.

By employing a quantitative method, this study ensures objectivity, reliability, and replicability of results. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence that can support the development of more effective instructional strategies and interventions aimed at improving English learning outcomes in similar higher education contexts.

B. Research Subject and Object

The research was conducted at STKIP Persada Khatulistiwa Sintang, specifically involving students from the 2nd semester of the English Education Program. The study took place during the academic year 2024/2025, specifically between June and July 2025. This institution was selected because it provides a relevant setting for exploring English learning difficulties in a tertiary-level EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. The 8th cohort was chosen as the subject of the study due to their representativeness and accessibility as participants who have experienced various stages of English language learning within the program.

The subjects of this research are students from the 8th cohort of the English Education Program at STKIP Persada Khatulistiwa Sintang. All students from this cohort were considered as participants in order to obtain comprehensive and representative data about the difficulties they face in learning English. The total number of participants is approximately [insert number] students. The researcher selected the entire population of the 2nd semester using a purposive sampling technique, focusing on those who were actively involved in English language learning activities during the period of data collection.

C. Data Collection Technique and Instruments

In this study, the researcher employed two primary data collection techniques: indirect communication through questionnaires and direct communication through interviews. These complementary methods were strategically chosen to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties encountered by eleventh-grade students in learning English. The use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches was essential to gain a holistic view of the issue, allowing for both broad generalization and deep exploration.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 5), combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a study—commonly referred to as a mixed-methods

approach—provides a more complete understanding of research problems than using either method alone. In this context, the distribution of questionnaires to a larger population of students served as an effective quantitative instrument to collect standardized data on learners' perceptions and experiences. On the other hand, qualitative interviews allowed the researcher to probe deeper into individual responses, uncovering the underlying reasons and contextual factors that contribute to students' learning difficulties.

The indirect communication technique, which involved the use of structured questionnaires, was effective in reaching a broad sample within a limited timeframe. As stated by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2016, p. 6), questionnaires are particularly useful for collecting data related to attitudes, beliefs, and self-reported behaviors of language learners, especially when dealing with large groups. In this study, the questionnaire was designed to measure specific internal and external variables—such as motivation, self-confidence, vocabulary knowledge, environmental support, and teaching strategies that potentially influence students' English learning outcomes.

Meanwhile, the interview technique played a crucial role in exploring deeper insights that could not be captured by the questionnaire alone. Interviews enabled the researcher to gather rich, narrative data that reflected the students' personal experiences, learning habits, emotional responses, and perceptions about English as a subject. Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 23) emphasize that qualitative interviews allow researchers to access the meaning individuals assign to their experiences and to interpret how they construct reality within specific educational settings.

Furthermore, the integration of both instruments is in line with the recommendations by Alshenqeeti (2019, p. 89), who argues that using multiple data collection tools enhances the validity and credibility of research findings. By triangulating data from questionnaires and interviews, this study aimed to ensure a more accurate representation of the learners' challenges and to identify patterns that might not be visible through a single method.

In conclusion, the combination of indirect and direct communication techniques in this study was not only methodologically sound but also aligned with best practices in educational research. It enabled the researcher to describe general trends quantitatively while also uncovering the nuanced, lived experiences of students qualitatively ultimately leading to a richer, more grounded understanding of the difficulties faced in learning English.

1. Data Collection Techniques

A. Indirect Communication Technique (Questionnaire)

The indirect communication technique refers to a method of data collection in which the researcher does not engage in face-to-face interaction with respondents during the data-gathering process. Instead, the researcher utilizes written or digital tools—such as questionnaires or surveys—to gather information from participants in a more impersonal manner. In the context of this study, the technique was implemented through the distribution of structured questionnaires to 2nd semester of the English Education Program at STKIP Persada Khatulistiwa Sintang. The primary objective was to obtain students' perspectives, self-reported experiences, and perceived difficulties in learning English, particularly in relation to cognitive, affective, and environmental factors.

This technique was chosen because of its practical advantages, particularly its efficiency in reaching a large number of respondents within a limited timeframe. As noted by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018, p. 472), questionnaires are highly suitable for studies involving large populations, as they provide a cost-effective, time-efficient, and scalable approach to data collection. Moreover, they enable the researcher to collect standardized responses that can be easily categorized, quantified, and analyzed for trends or patterns across a wide sample.

Questionnaires are especially useful in educational research when the goal is to measure attitudes, perceptions, or self-evaluated competencies. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2016, p. 7), in the field of language learning, questionnaires offer a valuable way to explore learner-internal variables such as motivation, anxiety, confidence, and learning preferences. In this study, the questionnaire was carefully designed to assess internal factors (such as vocabulary mastery, pronunciation ability, motivation, and interest) as well as external factors (such as school resources, teacher support, and home environment).

Furthermore, the use of indirect communication helps reduce social desirability bias, which often occurs in face-to-face data collection methods. Respondents may feel more comfortable expressing honest opinions or acknowledging their learning difficulties in a written, anonymous format rather than in a direct interaction with the researcher (Bryman, 2016, p. 217). This anonymity can lead to more authentic and reliable data, especially when dealing with sensitive topics such as personal challenges or academic weaknesses.

From a methodological standpoint, this approach aligns with Creswell and Creswell's (2018, p. 147) view that surveys are well-suited for descriptive studies aiming to examine the characteristics or conditions of a particular group. The structured format of the questionnaire allows for statistical analysis of trends and correlations between variables, thus offering a solid empirical foundation for interpreting students' learning difficulties.

In summary, the indirect communication technique—implemented through the use of questionnaires proved to be a highly effective method for this study. It enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive, quantifiable data from a large student population while minimizing potential bias and ensuring consistency in data collection. This approach not only enhanced the reliability and generalizability of the findings but

also provided a valuable starting point for further qualitative exploration through interviews.

b. Interview

Interviews play a crucial role in qualitative research because they allow researchers to delve into the participants' personal experiences, beliefs, and interpretations, which cannot be fully captured through structured questionnaires alone. As Kallio et al. (2016, p. 295) explain, interviews are particularly useful for exploring complex phenomena and clarifying ambiguities that may arise in quantitative data. In this study, the interview technique enabled the researcher to better understand students' internal challenges (such as lack of confidence or anxiety) as well as external influences (such as teaching styles, classroom conditions, and parental support).

The type of interview used in this research was a semi-structured interview, which strikes a balance between structured control and open-ended flexibility. This technique involves the use of a prepared set of guiding questions, but also allows the researcher to follow up with spontaneous, clarifying, or probing questions based on the participant's responses. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2018, p. 114), semi-structured interviews are ideal for educational research because they offer both consistency and adaptability, enabling researchers to explore individual perspectives while still maintaining focus on the research objectives.

This format also allows for the exploration of participants' own language and framing of their experiences, which is essential when examining subjective issues such as learning difficulties. As noted by Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 24), interviews help uncover the "meaning-making" processes of individuals, particularly in educational

contexts where learners may struggle to articulate their challenges in standardized formats.

Moreover, interviews with teachers offered valuable insights into classroom dynamics, common learning obstacles observed among students, and the strategies employed by educators to address those difficulties. The inclusion of multiple respondent types (students and teacher) enhanced the credibility and triangulation of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 261), allowing for the cross-verification of findings and deeper interpretation.

In summary, the use of semi-structured interviews in this study was essential to capture the lived experiences of students and contextual influences that affect their English learning process. This technique provided the researcher with the flexibility to explore issues as they emerged and adapt the direction of the conversation to gain more insightful, relevant data.

2. Data Collection Instruments

A. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was systematically developed based on clearly defined indicators related to students' learning difficulties in English. These indicators were categorized into two main domains: internal and external factors. Internal factors encompassed aspects such as students' interest in learning English, their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and their level of self-confidence when engaging with the language. These factors are considered essential in shaping a learner's attitude and persistence in overcoming challenges related to language acquisition.

On the other hand, external factors included elements beyond the individual student, such as the learning environment (including classroom atmosphere and teacher support), family

involvement and encouragement, as well as the availability and adequacy of school facilities that support English learning. These factors play a significant role in either facilitating or hindering students' efforts in mastering English skills.

To measure these dimensions, the questionnaire consisted of a series of carefully constructed statements reflecting the indicators mentioned above. Each statement was rated using a five-point Likert scale, which allowed respondents to indicate their level of agreement or frequency of experiencing certain situations. The Likert scale used was as follows:

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

This format enabled the researcher to capture nuanced perceptions and attitudes of the students regarding the difficulties they encounter in learning English, thus providing both quantitative and qualitative insights for further analysis.

Tabel 3.1 : Variables, Subfocus, and Indicators of Students' Difficulties in Learning English

No	Variable / Subfocus	Indicator
1	Difficulties in English Language Skills	a. Difficulty in understanding listening materials b. Difficulty in expressing ideas orally c. Difficulty in understanding English reading texts d. Difficulty in organizing and writing English texts
2	Internal Psychological Factors	a. Low motivation to learn English b. Lack of self-confidence c. Anxiety during English lessons d. Negative attitude towards English
3	External Learning Environment Factors	a. Unattractive or monotonous teaching methods b. Inadequate school facilities or learning media

		c. Lack of support from family or peers d. No access to additional learning resources outside the classroom
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b. Interview Guideline

The interview guideline was developed to provide structure and direction during the interview process with both students and the English teacher. It consisted of several open-ended questions aimed at exploring students' learning experiences, the obstacles they face, and their perceptions of English as a subject. The questions were carefully designed based on preliminary findings from the questionnaire and relevant theories concerning learning difficulties. For instance, students were asked about the factors that make learning English difficult for them, their opinions on the teaching methods used by their English teacher, and whether they feel supported by their learning environment. Meanwhile, the interview with the teacher focused on their observations regarding students' language abilities, the common challenges encountered in the classroom, and the strategies implemented to help students overcome these difficulties. Overall, the guideline helped the researcher maintain consistency and alignment with the focus of the study while still allowing flexibility for deeper exploration based on participants' responses.

Tabel 3.2 : Internal and External Factors Influencing English Learning

No	Factor	Indicator	Description/Sample Questionnaire Item
1	Internal	Interest in learning	I am interested in learning English.
2	Internal	Learning motivation	I have a strong motivation to learn English.
3	Internal	Self-confidence	I feel confident when speaking English in front of the class.

4	Internal	Discipline and study habits	I usually review English lessons at home.
5	Internal	Concentration and attention	I find it difficult to concentrate during English lessons.
6	External	Family support	My parents support me in learning English.
7	External	School learning environment	The classroom environment helps me learn English comfortably
8	External	Learning facilities	The school provides sufficient facilities to support English learning.
9	External	Teacher's role in teaching	My English teacher explains the material in an easy-to-understand way.
10	External	Access to learning resources	I have access to books, the internet, or apps to learn English at home.

D. Data Analysis Technique

In this study, the data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis, which is suitable for interpreting non numerical data such as students' opinions, experiences, and perceptions regarding their difficulties in learning English. This technique focuses on identifying patterns, themes, and categories from the collected data and presenting them in a descriptive and interpretative manner.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative data analysis involves a process of organizing, coding, and interpreting data to derive meaning from participants' responses. In this research, data from both the questionnaire and interviews were systematically analyzed to identify recurring difficulties faced by students, such as challenges in vocabulary, pronunciation, motivation, and environmental support.

1. Analysis of Questionnaire Data

Although the questionnaire used a Likert scale, the analysis did not involve complex statistical computations. Instead, the responses were categorized and interpreted descriptively to reveal trends in students'

perceptions. Each item was classified into levels of agreement (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), and the frequencies or percentages of each response category were calculated to determine which aspects of English learning students found most difficult.

As noted by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2016), Likert-scale questionnaires can be used effectively in qualitative research when the goal is to describe trends or identify dominant issues, rather than to test hypotheses statistically. The results from the questionnaire served as a general overview of the students' perceived difficulties, which were then explored in greater depth during the interview analysis.

2. Analysis of Interview Data

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The researcher transcribed all interview recordings and read through them multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding. The data were then coded manually, and similar codes were grouped into broader themes representing various factors contributing to students' learning difficulties.

Braun and Clarke (2019) describe thematic analysis as a flexible and rigorous method that allows researchers to interpret complex qualitative data through the systematic process of theme development. In this study, thematic categories included internal factors (e.g., low confidence, lack of motivation) and external factors (e.g., lack of resources, unsupportive environment), which aligned with the framework used in the questionnaire.

The use of triangulation between questionnaire results and interview findings also helped to increase the validity and reliability of the analysis. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest, triangulation enhances credibility by confirming whether patterns identified in one data set also appear in another.